

TIPS FOR A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP



THE HOURS BEFORE GOING TO BED



- Stop drinking coffee 6 hours before heading to bed. The caffeine sticks around for a while so best to have it out of your system before bedtime.
- Stop drinking alcohol 3 hours before. Although alcohol may at first act as a sedative, it tends to interrupt normal sleep patterns. You may fall asleep quickly but then wake soon after and struggle to get back to sleep.
- Don't smoke. Nicotine is a stimulant and can make it difficult to relax.
- Finish exercising 2 hours before heading to bed. Twenty to thirty minutes of exercise every day can help you sleep but schedule it earlier in the day or evening.
- Finish dinner and stop snacking 2 hours before. Eating a large, heavy meal too late in the evening can interfere with your normal sleep cycle or have you dream excessively when you wake up unrefreshed from the night's events.
- Turn off electronic devices 1 hour before sleep. It is well established that the bright light from the screens of devices, confuses your brain so it responds to it like daylight (the wake up hormones kick in) making it more difficult to get to sleep.

GETTING READY FOR SLEEP



- Cool room if possible. Most of us sleep way better in the cooler months so keeping your bedroom cool can make a big difference and not over-loading your bed with excessive blankets is important in warmer months.
- Make sure your bed is large enough and comfortable. Try therapeutic shaped foam pillows that cradle your neck or extra pillows that help you sleep on your side.
- Hide your clock. A big, illuminated digital clock may cause you to focus on the time and may make you feel stressed and anxious. Place your clock within easy reach but so you can't see the time when you are in bed.

- Keep a regular schedule. Try to go to bed and wake up at the same time everyday. Keeping a regular schedule will help your body expect sleep at the same time 24-hour cycle. Resist oversleeping to make up for a poor night's sleep – doing that can reset your body clock and make it hard for you to get back into your ideal sleep rhythm.
- Relax for a while before going to bed. This may include meditation, relaxation and/or breathing exercises, or taking a warm bath or shower before bedtime.
- Try not to nap during the day. This will play havoc with your body clock and make it even more difficult to sleep at night. If you feel you absolutely must nap, be sure to sleep for less than 30 minutes, but avoid late afternoon naps or falling asleep in front of the TV.

GETTING TO SLEEP



- Get out of bed if unable to sleep. Go into another room and do something relaxing until you feel sleepy. Help your body recognize that bed is a place for sleep. If you are fully awake while lying in bed, get out of bed and do something productive and try to minimise exposure to bright screens including TV, iPads, or smart phones.
- Listen to an audio book. Listening to a narrative or story will distract from the thoughts that can keep us awake at night – something more Stephen Fry and less Stephen King perhaps.

WHEN TO REACH OUT FOR HELP

If you find your anxiety or fear about the coronavirus is building to the point that intruding on your thoughts or preventing you from getting on with your daily life, seek assistance. That is where we can potentially help.

Converge offers 24-hour, 7 day a week counselling support. The great thing is, because we offer phone and videoconferencing facilities, we can provide that support for you, even if you're at home.

To access the EAP services, simply call 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327) to make a time to speak with one of our team.

MORE
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